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BEN BARKA CASE TAKES NEW TURN

Moroccan Official Reported
Ready to Stand Trial

By HENRY TANNER

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PARIS, Oct. 18 — The Ben Barka case took a sensational new turn today.

Col. Ahmed Dlimi, head of the Moroccan secret police, who was due to be tried in absentia for his participation in the kidnapping and probable murder of Mehdi Ben Barka, a Moroccan nationalist leader, was reported to have flown to Paris to give himself up.

Also, a former Algerian politician boasting close contacts with prominent Gaullist personalities said in a news magazine that high officials of the French police and Interior Ministry had known of the plot to kidnap Mr. Ben Barka and had intended to exploit it politically.

The new complications came on the eve of the scheduled termination of the trial of five Frenchmen and a Moroccan accused of participating in Ben Barka's abduction. Verdicts against the Frenchmen had been scheduled to be handed down tomorrow.

On Thursday the same court was scheduled to hand down a judgment in absentia on the Moroccan Defense Minister, Gen. Mohammed Oufkir, as well as on Colonel Dlimi and a third Moroccan official and four French gangsters.

Delay in Trial Asked

If, as was expected, those verdicts, confirmed the French Government's contention that guilt in the bizarre affair was limited to subordinate French figures and high-ranking Moroccan officials, the affair was to disappear from the headlines.

It was also expected that President de Gaulle, in the news conference he has scheduled for Oct. 28, would draw the conclusion that General Oufkir was culpable and that the French police and Interior Ministry, whose role has been castigated by lawyers during the trial, had been exonerated.

Now the outcome is in danger of being upset.

Lawyers for the Ben Barka family, which is the plaintiff, as well as those for the defendants urged that the trial be adjourned to permit the inclusion of new testimony.

Nacerdine Challal, the Algerian politician whose testimony appeared in the left-wing weekly *Nouvel Observateur*, has declared himself willing to appear in court.

As for Colonel Dlimi, his whereabouts was not apparent. A communique issued in Rabat by King Hassan's office said he had flown to Paris during the night, but the French police said there was no record of his arrival.

Letter to King Hassan

The Moroccan communique said that Colonel Dlimi had given his wife a letter to the King advising him that he was going to Paris to clear his name and the name of his country. He telephoned his wife from Paris this morning, the communique added.

"All though this trial my country has been the victim of libel and blasphemy, and its name has been dragged in the mud, and all this because of me," the colonel wrote the King, according to the communique.

There was speculation that Colonel Dlimi might declare that he was the only Moroccan official involved in the abduction. Such a declaration would tend to clear General Oufkir, who is being regarded by the French Government as the chief villain.

Mr. Ben Barka, who was kidnapped shortly after noon on October 29, 1965, was taken away by policemen, who have told the jury they thought they were leading him to a rendezvous with high-ranking Moroccan officials at the request of the French Interior Ministry and the French intelligence agency.

The policemen say they delivered him to a villa in the suburbs to which General Oufkir and Colonel Dlimi have been traced. Mr. Ben Barka has not been seen since then and is presumed to have been killed.

Denial By Intelligence Agency

The French intelligence agency has denied the allegation that it "covered" the abduction, but has conceded that one of its medium-ranking officials knew about it. The Interior Ministry denies having had anything to do with the affair.

The statement of Mr. Challal, the Algerian politician, bears on the role of the Interior Ministry, the French police and Pierre Lemarchand, a prominent Gaullist, Deputy and a close friend of Interior Minister Roger Frey.

Mr. Challal, who lives in Paris, says he was approached by the Moroccans five months before Mr. Ben Barka's disappearance. He contends that they asked him to enlist the help of his friends in the Interior Ministry in bringing about a rendezvous between Mr. Ben Barka and a Moroccan Government representative.

Mr. Challal says he did so against his own better judgment at the insistence of Mr. Lemarchand.

Mr. Lemarchand, he asserts, came long before Mr. Ben Barka's arrival in Paris that the Moroccans planned a kidnapping. But Mr. Lemarchand, he adds, working closely with the

French police, intended to let the kidnapping take its course only to step in at the right moment to save Mr. Ben Barka, blacken the conservative Moroccan Government and win credit for France in nationalist African circles.

Mr. Challal asserts that before the kidnapping an unidentified Interior Ministry official called the policemen who were to spirit Mr. Ben Barka away and authorized them to do so.

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